Campaign to promote tourism

126. SHRI R.P. GOENKA:
SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a nationwide campaign called *Atithi devo bhava* has been launched recently to sensitise and train some 26,000 key stakeholders in the tourist industry towards attracting more foreign tourists;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the present status of its implementation; and

(c) the details of any similar programe launched/proposed to be launched to give fillip to domestic tourism which remains a vast untapped market with immense economic implications?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOUDHURY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 'Atithi Devo Bhavah' is a Social Awareness Campaign aimed at providing the inbound tourist with a sense of being welcomed by and to the country. The compaign targets the geneal public as a whole, while focusing mainly on the stakeholders of the tourism industry. The main components of the campaign are training and orientation to taxi drivers, guides, immigration officers, tourist police and other personnel directly interacting with the tourists, while simultaneously creating a brand equity for the trained persons. "Atithi Devo Bhavah" involes Sensitisation, Screening, Induction, Training & Orientation, Certification and Feedback of key stackholders of the Tourism industry in India. Approximately 20,500 stakeholders which include taxi drivers, porters, security staff, immigration and custom staff, railway employees have been trained.

(c) A programme for celebration of 350 years of the Taj Mahal has been launched.

Night view of Taj Mahal

†127. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court has given its permission to the tourists to see the Taj Mahal situated at Agra during night time also;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the number of domestic as well as foreign tourists who came to see the Taj Mahal in the night during the last two years;

(c) whether the income has increased during last two months by opening the Taj Mahal for night viewing; and

(d) if so, whether the number of tourists coming to see the Taj Mahal in the night can be increased and if so, by when it can be done?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOUDHURY): (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be placed on the floor of the house.

Development of Buddhist Tourist Centres

†128. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of Buddhist tourists visit India; and

(b) if so, the scheme formulated by Government to develop places related to Mahatma Buddha for tourism purposes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOUDHURY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Identification of places relating to Mahatma Buddha and their development for tourism purposes is a continuous process. Their development is undertaken under various schemes of Infrastructure Development of the Ministry of Tourism as well as through various externally aided projects through international funding agencies.

Boost to domestic tourism

129. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to give a boost to the domestic tourism for the year 2005, by providing low budget accommodation and travelling facilities to new destinations of varied interests;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.